

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 ISO-00

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LONDON FOR NELSON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UNGA, SGEN

SUBJ: 28TH GA--THIRD COMMITTEE SECOND AGENDA ITEM,
PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

1. SUMMARY. THIRD COMITE COMPLETED OCT 15 CONSIDERATION OF SECOND AGENDA ITEM PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS IN AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICT. FOLLOWING USEFUL DEBATE WHICH REVEALED THAT US CONCERNS RE PROVISIONS OF AMENDED FRENCH TEXT WERE WIDELY SHARED BY OTHER DELS, COMITE AGREED BY CONSENSUS TO REFER TEXT, AMENDMENTS AND RECORD OF THIS DEBATE TO FORTHCOMING DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW. US DEL (MARK EVANS), WHILE DELIBERATELY PLAYING VERY LOW-KEY ROLE, WAS ABLE TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS TO SUPPORT SUCH REFERRAL WHILE AVOIDING OFFENSE TO EMBATTLED FRENCH DEL. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSIDERATION OF SECOND ITEM ON THIRD COMITE'S AGENDA, PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS ENGAGED IN DANGEROUS MISSIONS IN AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICTS, COMPLETED MONDAY, OCT 15. DEBATE OPENED WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATEMENT BY FRENCH DEL (JACQUES BOURGOIN) URGING POSITIVE ACTION

ON FRENCH DRAFT CONVENTION AT CURRENT SESSION. IT SOON APPEARED THAT MANY DELS HAD DIFFICULTY WITH DRAFT TEXT, INCLUDING NON-ALIGNED, FOR REASONS EXPLAINED BELOW, AND CERTAIN WEO'S WHO WERE CONCERNED RE POSSIBLE ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION. BASIC NON-ALIGNED POSITION MOST ELOQUENTLY DESCRIBED BY ALGERIAN DEL (BEN MEHAL) WAS THAT CONVENTION BASICALLY DESIGNED TO BENEFIT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, I.E., THOSE WHO SEND OUT CORRESPONDENTS, AT EXPENSE OF LDC'S WHO DON'T HAVE CORRESPONDENTS TO SEND BUT IN WHOSE TERRITORIES ARMED CONFLICTS MOSTLY TAKE PLACE. ALGERIAN ALSO MAINTAINED CONVENTION WOULD MILITATE AGAINST CHANCES OF LIBERATION MOVEMENTS GETTING THEIR STORY TO WORLD PRESS, SINCE THEY WOULD NOT HAVE FACILITIES TO ISSUE IDENTIFICATION CARDS NOR TO AFFORD SPECIAL PROTECTION TO JOURNALISTS.

3. EARLY IN DEBATE NON-ALIGNED BLOC CAUCUSED BRIEFLY RETURNING WITH DECISION TO DEFER WHOLE ITEM UNTIL NEXT ASSEMBLY. THIS DECISION TO IMPOSE GAG RULE MUCH RESENTED BY WEO'S WAS GAVELLED DOWN BY CHAIRMAN MAHMASSANI (LEBANON) WHO REITERATED FORCEFULLY THAT DECISION TO CONSIDER CONVENTION PARA BY PARA HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY COSENSUS DURING FIRST MEETING ON THIS ITEM.

4. IN FACT DEBATE WHICH THEN ENSUED PARA BY PARA BUT WITHOUT VOTING WAS NOTABLE FOR INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION OF ISSUES. FRENCH DEL BOURGOIN WORKED HARD TO DEFEND CONVENTION RESPONDING TIME AND AGAIN TO CRITICISMS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION. SINCE IT WAS EVIDENT FROM OUTSET THAT DRAFT CONVENTION WAS WIDELY OPPOSED, US (MARK EVANS) PLAYED VERY LOW-KEY ROLE, SO AS TO AVOID OFFENDING FRENCH SENSITIVITIES ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF US PROMISE NOT TO BLOCK FRENCH EFFORT OR CAUSE GOF UNNECESSARY TROUBLE (PARIS 17493, LOU, 9/16/72).

5. AT PM MEETING OCT 15 COMITE ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS DRAFT RES SUBMITTED BY BRAZIL, PAKISTAN, AND TUNISIA WHICH A) EXPRESSES DESIRABILITY OF ADOPTING CONVENTION FOR PROTECTING JOURNALISTS; B) REQUESTS SYG TO TRANSMIT TO DIPLOMATIC PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE ON HUMANITARIAN LAW TO BE HELD IN GENEVA FEB-MARCH 1974 TEXT OF DRAFT CONVENTION, AND AMENDMENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOGETHER WITH OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS DURING CURRENT SESSION; C) INVITES ABOVE CONFERENCE TO COMMENT AND ADVISE UPON THESE TEXTS; D) DECIDES TO CONTINUE EXAMINATION OF ITEM AT 29TH GA HAVING REGARD TO FINDINGS OF CONFERENCE. SCALI

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